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Boeing and Microsoft donate \$50-million for unusual public-private scholarships

By Armando Montaña
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The Boeing Company and the Microsoft Corporation agreed on Monday to donate \$25-million each over the next five years to a new scholarship fund for needy students in Washington State.

The State of Washington plans to match the companies' gifts under a bill signed on Monday by Gov. Christine O. Gregoire, a Democrat, that also encourages other companies and individuals to contribute to the fund. The moves could benefit tens of thousands of Washington residents who attend a college or university in the state.

The endowment—called the Washington Opportunity Scholarship Fund—will provide general scholarships to middle- and lower-income families as well as scholarships for those interested in science, engineering, health care, and other fields with a high demand for workers.

Microsoft and Boeing, which hope to raise more than \$1-billion in private and public support for the endowment by December 2020, plan to dole out the first awards by this December. An estimated 10,000 students will receive initial scholarships of \$1,000 each.